

### AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listing, of claims in the application:

Claim 1 (currently amended): A method for designing a fluid dynamic bearing system, comprising:

determining a first performance characteristic stability ratio for a first journal bearing configuration having one or two sub-journal bearings;

determining a second performance characteristic stability ratio for a second journal bearing configuration having at least three sub-journal bearings, wherein each of the at least three sub-journal bearings provide radial stiffness; and

~~comparing the first and the second stability ratios~~

implementing the second journal bearing configuration if the second performance characteristic is improved relative to the first performance characteristic.

Claim 2 (original): The method of claim 1, wherein the first configuration comprises two sub-journal bearings and the second configuration comprises three sub-journal bearings.

Claim 3 (original): The method of claim 2, wherein each sub-journal bearing of the first configuration has a length equal to substantially one-half of a total journal length and each sub-journal bearing of the second journal configuration has a length equal to substantially one-third of the total journal length.

Claim 4 (currently amended): The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of determining a third performance characteristic stability ratio of a third journal bearing configuration ~~if the second stability ratio is greater than the first stability ratio.~~

Claim 5 (cancelled)

Claim 6 (original): The method of claim 4, wherein the first configuration comprises two sub-journal bearings, the second configuration comprises three sub-journal bearings, and the third configuration comprises four sub-journal bearings.

Claim 7 (original): The method of claim 6, wherein each sub-journal bearing of the first configuration has a length equal to substantially one-half of a total journal length, each sub-journal bearing of the second journal configuration has a length equal to substantially one-third of the total journal length, and each sub-journal bearing of the third journal configuration has a length equal to substantially one-fourth of the total journal length.

Claim 8 (currently amended): The method of claim 1, wherein the first configuration comprises N number of sub-journals and the second configuration comprises  $N+1$   $[(N+1)]$  number of sub-journals.

Claim 9 (currently amended): The method of claim 8, further comprising the steps of: determining a third performance characteristic ~~stability ratio~~ of a third journal bearing configuration, the third configuration comprising  $N+2$   $[(N+2)]$  number of sub-journals, ~~if the second stability ratio is greater than the first stability ratio; and comparing the third stability ratio to the second stability ratio.~~

Claims 10-20 (cancelled)

Claim 21 (new): The method of claim 1, wherein the first performance characteristic comprises a first stability ratio and the second performance characteristic comprises a second stability ratio.

Claim 22 (new): The method of claim 21, wherein the second performance characteristic is improved if the second stability ratio is greater than the first stability ratio.